

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A data service apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing digital data;

an encryption circuit for encrypting digital data into encrypted data;

a decryption circuit for decrypting encrypted data into its initial digital data, and

an identification code generation circuit for generating an identification code unique to the data service apparatus,

wherein

digital data, to be backed up, stored in the storage means is extracted, encrypted by the encryption circuit into encrypted data and stored in an external storage unit; and

encrypted data, to be decrypted, stored in the external storage unit is extracted, decrypted by the decryption circuit into the initial digital data and written back to the storage means,

the encryption circuit is operable to perform encryption by utilizing the identification code generated by the identification code generation circuit; and

the decryption circuit is operable to perform decryption by utilizing the identification code generated by the identification code generation circuit.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The data service apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising a falsification detection circuit for checking, when decrypting the digital data from the encrypted data, the digital data according to the identification code generated by the identification code generation circuit, and for inhibiting the initial digital data

from being written back to the storage means when it is found that the digital data has been falsified.

4. (currently amended) The data service apparatus according to any one of claims 1,—2 and 3, further comprising a comparison circuit for making a comparison in attribute data between the digital data in the storage means and the digital data stored in the external storage unit,

wherein digital data, which has been updated after being previously backed up in the external storage unit, and which is stored in the storage means, is stored into the external storage unit depending upon~~according to~~ a comparison result from the comparison circuit.

5. (previously presented) The data service apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

a detection circuit for detecting an optimum file of digital data for storage as a file into the external storage unit;

an aggregation circuit for aggregating a plurality of files into one file;

a division circuit for dividing a file into a plurality of files each having a predetermined size;

a synthesis circuit for combining the divided files together into one file; and

a separation circuit for separating one file formed from a plurality of files into the plurality of files, wherein

for backup of the digital data:

digital data read by the aggregation circuit from the storage means are aggregated into one file;

the file as a result of the aggregation is divided by the division circuit according to the size detected by the detection circuit; and

the file as a result of the division being stored into the external storage unit; and wherein

for decryption of the digital data:

the encrypted data stored in the external storage unit are decrypted and combined by the synthesis circuit into an initial one file; and

the file as a result of the synthetic combination is separated by the separation circuit into the plurality of initial digital data and written back to the storage means.

6. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a communications circuit for performing information communications with an external certificate server,

~~wherein an inquiry is made about whether the digital data to be decrypted may be restored to the external certificate server via the communications circuit, and the restoration of the digital data to be decrypted is done only when the communications circuit has received a permission of restoration from the external certificate circuit.~~